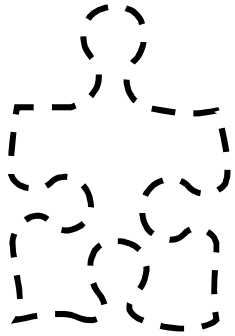


Are you the missing piece?



Parent Engagement happens when...

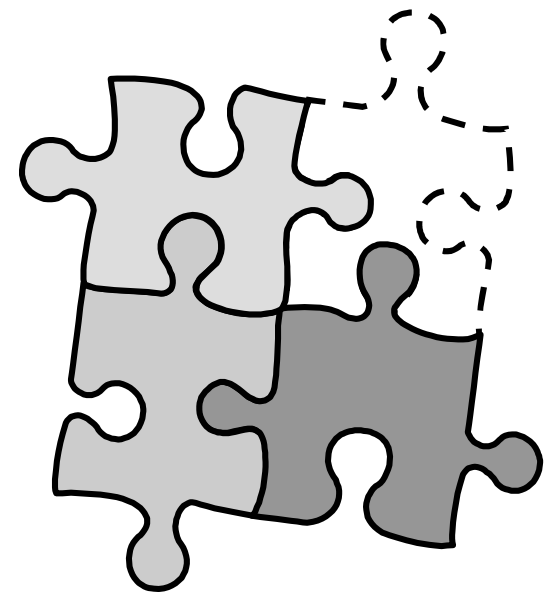
Families and service organizations come together to interact in a new way. They are able to generate mutual respect by working on common goals. It is a way for families and organizations to gain valuable information. This information can be used to enhance or develop systems, practices, and programs which are more effective. More importantly, parent engagement allows families and organizations to increase each other's potential for positive outcomes.

"Families are big, small, extended , nuclear, multi-generational, with one parent, two parents and grandparents. We live under one roof or many. A family can be as temporary as a few weeks, as permanent as forever. We become part of a family by birth, adoption, marriage, or from a desire for mutual support...A family is a culture unto itself, with different values and unique ways of realizing its dream; together our families become the source of our rich cultural heritage and spiritual diversity...Our families create neighborhoods, communities, states and nations."

*Task Force on Young Children & Families,
New Mexico Legislature*

*Prevent Child Abuse Virginia. 2004
This publication made possible by a Community-Based Family
Resource and Support grant from the Virginia Department of Social
Services.*

Parent **E**ngagement



Barriers and Benefits

Organizations carry out their activities in a variety of ways. When these activities are grouped together they are known as the systems, policies and procedures of the organization. Very often these activities are not apparent to families using the services of the organization.

Families, too, carry out their activities in many ways. These activities may be influenced by environment, culture, viewpoints and attitudes. Parent Engagement activities can provide a place where both parties come together to learn more about each other and work on common goals.

Some common barriers:

- ✕ Transportation /child care issues
- ✕ Meetings held only during work hours
- ✕ Lack of information about the roles of families
- ✕ Lack of resources

Some of the benefits:

- ✕ Families feel good about making a contribution
- ✕ Builds and develops knowledge and skills for families and organizations
- ✕ Develops fresh perspectives about service delivery
- ✕ Builds an advocacy base

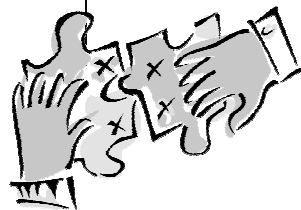
What Piece Can Parents & Family Members Add

Parent Engagement asks that families consider their community as a network of connections. Individuals and organizations connected to one another. Families are connected to schools, stores, faith-based organizations, friends and other families. In order for these networks of connections to thrive there must be an exchange of resources. All of us have resources which we can contribute. These resources might be time, knowledge or simply the willingness to be of service.

For Family Members:

- ✕ Let your service organization know of your willingness to be of service
- ✕ Start out with simple activities
- ✕ Volunteer to work on a committee or task force
- ✕ Form a Parent Advisory Group
- ✕ Help evaluate a program
- ✕ Fund raise for an event or program
- ✕ Attend a conference
- ✕ Become a co-trainer or facilitator

Families can discover that they have services to offer that can prove valuable to the organization.



What Piece Can Organizations Add

There is a shift in human services delivery that encourages public and private agencies to work together with families. These strategies are more preventative, responsive, flexible, family-focused, strength-based—and thus more effective.

For Organizations:

- ✕ Identify opportunities for family inputs
- ✕ Remove barriers that would inhibit involvement
- ✕ Actively encourage and affirm the belief that collaboration is possible

Family Support America® and Circle of Parents® each offer models of how Parent Engagement can be operationalized. They can serve as resources for further exploration.

